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FOR NEA/ARPI, NEA/P (GSULLIVAN), NEA/PPD  
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SUBJECT: CRIMINAL COURT AMENDS LIBEL VERDICT AGAINST AL-  
WATAN

REF: KUWAIT 4999

¶1. On December 10, the Kuwaiti Criminal Court amended its December 3 sentence of Islamist columnist Ahmad Al-Kose and Shaykh Khalifa Ali Al-Khalifa Al-Sabah, editor-in-chief of the Arabic daily Al-Watan; the two men were convicted for publishing a libelous editorial against liberal political science professor and columnist Dr. Ahmad Al-Baghdadi (reftel). The court downgraded the sentence from a two-month suspended jail sentence and a 50KD (\$170) fine to just the 50KD fine. The court also overturned its one-week suspension of Al-Watan after the daily objected to the ruling.

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LEBARON